



NEWS RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

BLUE SPRINGS MAN PLEADS GUILTY TO CHILD PORNOGRAPHY AND ATTEMPTED SEXUAL ACTIVITY WITH A MINOR

KANSAS CITY, Mo. – Todd P. Graves, United States Attorney for the Western District of Missouri, announced that a Blue Springs man pleaded guilty today to possession of child pornography and traveling across state lines for the purpose of meeting a 14-year-old girl and having sex with her.

Robert L. Smith, 56, of Blue Springs, pleaded guilty this morning before U.S. District Judge Nanette K. Laughrey to three counts of the seven-count indictment returned by a federal grand jury on April 23, 2002. **Smith** pleaded guilty to one count of traveling in interstate commerce for the purpose of engaging in a sexual act with a minor, and one count of possession of child pornography. **Smith** also pleaded to a forfeiture count, which requires him to forfeit to the United States a 1995 Dodge Ram truck that he drove from the state of Missouri to the state of Kansas to meet the 14-year-old girl, as well as any other property related to the charged offenses.

According to Graves, Detective Shawn Bostick of the Wichita Police Department, while assigned to the Exploited and Missing Child Unit, was acting in an undercover role on the Internet, identifying himself as a 14-year-old female named Jana. Beginning on November 15, 2001, Bostick (as “Jana”) engaged **Smith** in a series of Internet conversations.

By pleading guilty, **Smith** admitted that he told “Jana” he wanted to travel to Wichita to meet, and invited her to stay in a hotel room with him. According to the plea agreement, **Smith’s** Internet chats with “Jana” included references to engaging in a sexual relationship, although he believed “Jana” to be a minor. On December 31, 2001, Graves said, **Smith** traveled from Blue Springs to meet “Jana” at a shopping center in Wichita, where he was arrested.

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CHILD PORNOGRAPHY

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Law enforcement officers then searched **Smith's** home, Graves said, where they found a desk computer and a laptop computer that each contained visual depictions of minors engaged in sexually explicit conduct.

As a result of his guilty plea today, **Smith** could be subject to a sentence of up to 20 years in prison without parole, plus a fine up to \$500,000. The sentence will be determined according to the United States Sentencing Guidelines. A sentencing hearing will be scheduled sometime after the completion of a presentence investigation by the U.S. Probation Office.

The case is being prosecuted by Assistant U.S. Attorney Katharine Fincham. It was investigated by the Blue Springs, Missouri, Police Department; the Wichita, Kansas, Police Department; and the Overland Park, Kansas, Police Department.
